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ABSTRACT

Using examples of school change, this document discusses both Swedish experiences with local educational development and theories of schools and change. An introduction gives background information on Sweden's schools and its parlimentary activities on education. Section 2 reviews the history of local educational development, especially development activities of the 1940's and 1950's. Models of school reform and development are explored in section 3, which notes the parallel growth in Sweden of educational research and inservice training and cites problems with the research-and-development model of social change. Section 4 describes examples of local school development, including the establishment of education development centers; experiments on student, teacher, and parent involvement in decision-making in Uppsala schools; national studies to create models of school change; experimental development programs on a regional basis; and projects to increase cooperation between research and inservice training. The final section considers theoretical questions about Sweden's changing emphasis (from experiments to changes in everyday school activities), the use of school change to further general educational theory, and recent local school developments led by teachers. (RW)

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PREFACE

This paper was originally written for the Parliamentary Committee on Education to be included in their annual report for 1978-79. It is now published in English in an updated version. It is my hope that the paper will give an idea of some Swedish conceptions of school improvement.

Erik Wallin

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this survey is to examine the question of schools and change in the light of experience from Swedish experimental change projects which can be summed up under the heading of "Local educational development work". In other words we shall not discuss the role of research in Swedish educational development, though we shall consider research into the development of the school. Nor shall we discuss the importance of in-service teacher training as a means of changing the school, other than where it forms part of local development work. Despite these restrictions, the aim and title of this survey allow us sufficient scope to examine the issue of school change firstly in the light of the various experiments and studies which we shall describe and discuss here, and secondly in the wider perspective of the school as a social institution.

Since certain features of the Swedish education system may be unfamiliar to readers outside Sweden, a few remarks on the Swedish school are called for before we go any further. The compulsory basic comprehensive school (grundskolan) encompasses nine years and is followed by an upper secondary school (gymnasieskolan) lasting two, three or occasionally four years, which is optional but which approximately 80 per cent of any cohort choose to attend. Curricula are drawn up by a central education authority, the National Board of Education (NBE), and submitted in proposal form to the Government, which, after making necessary amendments, lays them before Parliament. In other words, decisions on the resources and basic goals of schools and education are made centrally. At present serious efforts are being made to devolve educational decision making to the local level. More decision making is being delegated to headteachers' "districts" and individual schools. It should, however, be noted that local decisions are made with reference to central directives. The result is a highly uniform education system, and indeed uniformity of the school system and of standards of education has been - and remains - the watchword of Swedish educational policy.

The centralistic Swedish model is often contrasted with its considerably more decentralized British and American counterparts. The difference in models of control does, to be sure, give rise to certain other differences: in Britain, for example, greater diversity among schools

can be expected than in Sweden. However, in certain fundamental respects the difference is not all that great. In particular, regardless of the system of school control and the degree of decentralization, decisions on goals and finance, which are of decisive importance to the school, are made by authorities external to the school system.

We point this out so as to provide the necessary background for understanding the experiences reported below and to make it easier to apply them to contexts outside Sweden.

In recent years the part played by educational research and development work in the development of the school has aroused considerable interest, both in the general educational debate and in the deliberations and decisions of central government. In the Budget proposals for 1977 - 78, then Cabinet minister Britt Mogård commented with regard to the National Board of Education's allocation for educational research and development, that:

> "The factors determining to what extent development work can have an influence on education are firstly whether research is firmly rooted in everyday school problems, and secondly, whether its findings can easily be passed on to individual schools. One way of promoting such a state of affairs might be to try to organize development work with a greater emphasis on the local level." (p.226f., our translation)

The comment is interesting on two scores. First, it reflects the belief that development work can have an influence on the school - which we can take to mean in a particular, desirable direction - provided it is carried out at a local level. And second, no distinction is made between development work and research: the chances of development work having an influence on education are dependent on whether research is firmly rooted in everyday school problems. If development work and research are the same thing, we can assume that they also face the same problems, including that of passing on their findings.

The comment is an enlargement on the basic views expressed in the previous year's Budget proposals, even if there educational development was regarded primarily as the responsibility of in-service training. Common to both sets of proposals is the great importance they attach to local

development work.

Further evidence of central government's interest in research into the school and in educational development work is the committee which was set up by the Minister of Education in March 1978 to look into the question of educational research and development within the school system and to make proposals on the matter. The committee's report (SOU 1980:2) was submitted two years later, and in the spring of 1981 the Swedish parliament passed a bill on the question.

Considering the views expressed in Budget proposals, committee reports, etc., but equally in view of the interest shown in local development work in other contexts and the hopes placed in its results, there is good reason to pay attention to development work of this kind. Local development work is expected to affect the school. A vital question which we must try to answer is, in that case: Will a greater emphasis on local development work promote school development more than present development measures? To be able to answer this question, we have to specify what we mean by "development" and to try and pin down in what circumstances different forms of development can be furthered.

2 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT WORK: AN INNOVATION, OR A REVIVAL OF THE FASHION OF THE FORTIES AND FIFTIES IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION?

It is not entirely out of place to pause a while to consider local development work from a historical point of view. Is it something new, or are the newly awakened interest and the current debate merely further evidence of the ahistoricity of educational research?

We may of course assume that development work initiated by teachers, such as work to improve their own teaching, has been carried out as long as schools have existed. There have always been conscientious and imaginative teachers and/or teachers dissatisfied with their situation. Without going back too far we can note that Fridtjuv Berg, who so energetically and eloquently championed the idea of all pupils attending the folkskola regardless of their later educational destinations, did not regard the reform he was striving for as a purely organizational change. He believed that it had to be accompanied by changes in the content of school work. It would be surprising if the desire for change did not take the form of development work even in those days.

Dewey, the leading representative of American progressivism, was a source of inspiration to the Swedish school, not least through the mediation of Alva Myrdal in the 1930s and 1940s. His works appeared in Swedish soon after the turn of the century. His ideas must surely have influenced local development work. The same thing must be true of Sweden's own educational genius, L. Gottfrid Sjöholm. As a trainer of teachers, he inspired in various ways a change in educational approach, through his courses and by his example.

In the 1930s we encounter the champions of activity methods and the German "Arbeitsschule" idea in Helsingborg and Gothenburg. Their initial experiments, at any rate, constituted local development work - work on changing the school as they then knew it. One person involved at that time was Esther Hermansson. She describes this work and the basis for it in enthusiastic terms. She is describing what we today might call local development work. Gunnar Richardson (1976) begins his review of her autobiographical "Upplevelser och påverkan" (i.e. Experiences and Influences) by asking a few questions:

"Where have all the local school reformers gone? What has happened to all those enthusiastic and imaginative teachers who tried out new methods and new teaching aids in their classrooms? And where have all the researchers, project managers, advisory officers, lecturers in teaching methods, chief education officers and directors of studies come from?"(Our translation)

Perhaps each question answers the other.

Has enthusiasm and imagination been institutionalized and thus been stifled or become alienated from everyday school reality? Many, no doubt, would say yes. It is quite clear that the desire for development and development work itself have been, if you like, institutionalized in certain respects. That is one of the things this survey will demonstrate. But does that mean the enthusiasm has been stifled?

The School Commission of 1946 [1] asked teachers at schools throughout the country to send in details of their own experimental work. According to Hermansson, about 850 replies were received, which has been described in various quarters as an impressively high figure. Would there be more or fewer replies today? That is a matter for conjecture, of course, but, notwithstanding all the lecturers, researchers and school directors of studies, there is nothing to suggest that the number would not be easily as large. We only need think of all the teachers today trying out LTG [2] as a method of teaching their pupils to read, for instance, or experimenting with new forms of team work in the classroom. Or, again, of all the schools where different types of team teaching, project work and so on are being tried out.

Perhaps enthusiasm has been undermined by the institutionalization of educational development work. Or perhaps this institutionalization merely puts a damper on the desire to report experiments outside what is usually termed educational development work, while the enthusiasm remains. This would be a possible explanation if there were fewer replies to a similar questionnaire today.

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1) The deliberations and proposals of this Commission laid the political and ideological foundations of Swedish school reform after 1950.

2) LTG is a method of teaching children to read based on their own speech and vocabulary.

Experimental work on comprehensive schools in the 1950s lent the words experiment and experimental project a flavour and dignity they had not had before. They were no longer regarded as the province of the individual teacher or the staff of a school in their day-to-day work. They became something out of the ordinary. Hence the demand for experiments. (There is even talk nowadays of mini-experiments!) But was it perhaps the case that certain groups had an interest in giving the word "experiment" a special sense?

As far as we can tell, the 850 experiments run and/or initiated by teachers found no direct expression in the Commission's proposals. It has been conjectured that this was because their approach ran counter to the objectives of the School Commission. Without access to the replies it is impossible to say just how tenable such a supposition is. Regardless of one's view on the matter, however, the School Commission was in fact interested in stimulating experimental work which was in line with its own objectives for schools' day-to-day activities. How did this affect the way development work was later carried out, its forms, and hence the occurrence of development work initiated locally by individual teachers?

These questions will be answered in part below. Here we can note, however, that local development work as an attempt to change refractory school reality is not new. But why, then, the sudden upsurge of interest in this kind of development work?

3 SCHOOL REFORM AND DEVELOPMENT WORK

The purpose of the previous section was mainly to tone down the discussion on local development work as something new, which might otherwise blow up out of all proportion what is in fact part and parcel of normal school activities. But we are nevertheless justified in asking whether the present interest is not representative of a new trend. The interest shown in, and attention paid to local development work in budget proposals, government official reports, the work of the NBE, the educational press, etc., can also be seen in a somewhat different historical perspective.

We suggested earlier that it was not necessarily in the interest of the School Commission to encourage the free and spontaneous development work mirrored by the 850 replies. We know that some teachers were opposed to both the shape and content of the kind of school envisaged by the Commission. Possibly some of the replies reflected values completely at odds with those held by the Commission. Be that as it may. It is quite obvious that when in 1962 the first comprehensive school curriculum was presented, as a codification of the School Commission's aims and solutions and of other compromises in educational policy, there was every reason to try to regulate school activities in order to implement it. It was not just a matter of trying to forestall opposition. The curriculum was, furthermore, something new, as it was designed to express a change in values with regard to schools and their activities.

There are a number of phenomena which reflect an awareness of the need for tighter state control over schools in a period of transition. In the 1950s educational research was enlisted in the work of drawing up the new curriculum (which appeared in 1962). Research had been recognized as a "knowledge producer" for the work of school change. And when the reforms were to be implemented, research was again expected to be able to help by coming up with the answers to problems faced by the school. The NBE was granted special funds to finance research on the school, as is still the case today. An organization was set up within the NBE with responsibility for planning research programmes and administering cooperation with research institutes. Thus an Educational Research Department came into being within the NBE.

Even if it is possible to find examples of research whose main aim was to explain concrete educational reality, research designed to find instruments and solutions predominated. Its findings could, it was hoped, help solve problems facing schools: individualization was one of the central themes and a compelling challenge, one which could be met by evolving new methods and, in particular, new teaching aids. Research "did its bit".

The period in which the NBE's Educational Research Department was established also saw the development of an in-service training organization. Previously teachers' associations themselves had sponsored this kind of training. A one-man commission of enquiry was set up by the Government in the 1950s, but none of its proposals were immediately implemented. It is no coincidence that in-service training expanded under the auspices of central and local government during the reform period of the 1960s.

The parallel development of educational research and in-service training is worth noting in this context. One of the tasks of in-service training was - and still is - to provide a means of diffusing the findings of research.

This parallelism is in itself perfectly natural: research in the education sector has long been highly geared to specific goals and its results have had to find practical application. What is interesting is the view of how school change occurs which was implied in the research carried out, and how this research was related to in-service training. Research was run on R & D lines, i.e. basic research was to produce results which would provide a foundation for applied research or development. The results of the latter would then be passed on to the people they were intended for, that is, the school with its staff and its reform problems. In the expansionary post-war period this rational model had proved its worth in general terms and in particular within science and technology, and had fired the economic progress of the western industrial nations.

An application of this model results in an end product. Applied in the educational field, it implies that change comes about in a certain way, that is, through the development and diffusion of new products - new

methods, new approaches, etc. - and their acceptance by the recipients, i.e. teachers. It is basically a technological view not only of change, but also of how teaching operates.

The current discussion on educational research and its relationship to problems of schools, and the dissatisfaction with its results which has been expressed, result from the fact that this model of change has proved invalid. Teaching is less a matter of applying techniques and methods than of finding out what conditions they presuppose and making these one's guiding principles in the classroom. Investment in the development of teaching aids appears to have given a low return. This is hardly because such aids have been "poor". On the contrary, they may have been very good, if we take the national curricula as criteria of "good" and "poor". More likely their designers have presented them as finished products and have not left any scope for - or observed the necessity of - providing, along with the finished teaching aids, information about what fundamental assumptions and values are necessary for their successful use in the classroom.

When the R & D model as described above does not live up to expectations, discontent arises. It does not produce change or bring us any nearer to solving school problems. Furthermore, the model has resulted in an essential field of research being neglected, that of school change. There will presumably be those who would reject such a claim. There is an extraodinarily large body of literature on innovation research and innovation diffusion. But this is just the point. Much work has been done on the diffusion of innovation, but most of it has been based on the agricultural sector. Now if it turns out that educational change does not work in the same way as the introduction and acceptance of new strains of potato, and we draw the wrong analogies, we shall end up with the wrong kind of research.

There is another phenomenon which can be seen in the perspective of R & D as outlined here and which came into being at roughly the same time as the NBE's R & D grants and the in-service training organization. We refer to the educational development centres, the first two of which were set up in Kalmar and Malmö in 1964. They reflected a belief in the importance of local initiative in school development. They were in fact a form of local development work. However, in more general terms these

centres tie in with the predominant R & D model of change. An examination of the decisions by which they were set up reveals, for example, an emphasis on their work yielding results which, like those of research, could be passed on to education authorities and teachers in other areas. Once again, the R & D innovation model can be discerned.

Nevertheless, the setting up of these development centres marked the start of the trend towards local development work which we see today. They incorporate local development work. Their later development illustrates how a revised model of change has found more and more favour. What then has been the significance of the educational development centres?

Before answering this question, we should point out that the trends in present-day discussion on local development work are not merely symptomatic of discontent with an erroneous model of change. Looked at in the broad historical perspective outlined earlier, they also reflect the fact that the reforms have now, in fact, taken such firm root that greater freedom can be permitted. In what is a general move towards decentralization, schools have been given greater scope for varying their activities on a local basis. It should be noted, however, that a Government Commission (the SSK Commission, cf. p.18) which pursued the question of local decision making further than any other and which saw increasing local influence over the school as a spur to development work, still retained the overall guiding principle of a uniform school system and uniform standards of education. Freedom has to be within defined limits.

4 EXAMPLES OF LOCAL WORK

4.1 Educational Development Centres

The aims, methods, etc. of the educational development centres are described in detail in the 1974-75 annual report of the Committee on Education (an advisory body to the NBE, set up by the Government). In addition, the centres are at present still being assessed,[1] and so our account of them will not be as comprehensive as could otherwise be expected, considering their importance as examples of local development work.

The first educational development centres, in Malmö and Kalmar, were set up in 1964 and have since been followed by another fourteen. What setting up a centre entails is that a Local Education Authority (LEA), or in some cases a County Education Board, is granted a certain sum annually to initiate and support development work. Finance is provided for five years in somewhat varying amounts, the highest being in the third year (at present 150 000 Swedish kronor), which is assumed to be the busiest. The different centres have an overall, uniting theme, arrived at after discussion between the NBE and LEAs wishing to be considered. Most of the centres have fairly similar organizational structures, with decision-making functions, project organizers and project teams, which vary in number according to the number of experiments making up the nucleus of the centre's work.

Project work is centred on a variety of problems, whose origins and formulations also vary. In the earliest schemes, there was a tendency for the problems to be formulated far more often by the NBE and the LEA than by teachers in the field. This has changed to a certain degree. Lindblad carried out a close study of two centres, and one of the things he was interested in was how people came to be involved in project work.

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1) The assessment is being carried out by Sverker Lindblad at the Department of Education of Uppsala University. An interim report is available, see Lindblad 1977.

Manner of recruitment	f	%
Passive recruitment:		
Invited by LEA/project organizers	71	37
Invited by colleagues already participating	49	25
Entire school involved in centre's work	29	15
Total passive recruitment	(149	77)
Recruitment on own initiative:		
By contacting LEA/project organizers	7	4
By contacting participants in project	2	4
By starting project of one's own	25	13
Total recruitment on own initiative	(34	18)
Other forms of recruitment:	20	5
Total	193	100

The table shows that barely one-fifth of the participants took part on their own initiative. The rest were, in one way or another, invited to do so. This form of recruitment is based on channels of communication already opened up by LEAs. It is of course a perfectly natural method, but results in the group of participants differing from other teachers in the municipality. Lindblad examined one of the centres more closely and found that members of this group were older than other teachers, and that, even allowing for this age factor, they included proportionately more heads of department and more teachers who had taken part in other development work or in-service training etc.

Great hopes were placed in these centres when the idea was launched. The following can be read in the NBE's budget estimates for 1966-67, i.e. in the early days of the centres:

"The primary goal of the centres' work has been to find practicable means of implementing the aims of already adopted or proposed school reforms - both within and beyond compulsory schooling. In the longer term, the centres' development work is aimed at continuous curricular revision." (p.10:36, our translation)

The centres' chief task is to help implement educational reforms by finding "practicable means", i.e. solutions which can be passed on to other schools, local authorities, and so on, in reports or through the mediation of advisory officers. However, the idea is not just to implement educational reforms, but also to go beyond them with a view to curricular change. It is here that, within the centres' work, the possibility of criticizing adopted reforms arises. In a memorandum from the NBE in 1966, another goal was defined:

"The purpose of the educational development centres is to encourage experimental work involving as many teachers as possible in their daily work." (Our translation)

In this way, full use is made of interest in development work where it actually occurs. The centres and the possibilities they offer are intended as a source of encouragement. It is also important to note that the quotation talks of the teachers' "daily work", thus underlining the local character of this development work.

It is not easy to say whether the results of this project live up to expectation. For further discussion we refer to Lindblad (1977). Here we shall examine a number of fundamental questions. Have, for example, the development centres led to the discovery of "practicable means" of implementing school reform? The memorandum mentioned above suggests that models for teaching and other school activities are the forms such "practicable means" most commonly assume.

The total number of experiments and hence of models is too large to be easily counted. Consequently the number of reports describing the models is also large. This is the problem constantly facing R & D work: the diffusion of results. Although great efforts and considerable ingenuity have been applied to overcoming it, the problem still remains.

Lindblad describes in his assessment the different ways non-participant

teachers had come into contact with the centres and what they thought they had got out of these various contacts. Clearly personal contacts had proved the most valuable, while reports, articles and the like, although they were able to reach a wider audience, had given a smaller return.

Many of those who have been involved in educational development centres claim, however, that other teachers' apathy has proved something of a stumbling block. It is only to be expected if, as a result of such experiences, participants look for alternative methods of passing on what they have learnt, e.g. by introducing other teachers to their working methods in a straightforward, concrete manner - and thus letting them learn from experimenting themselves.

Although part of the problem is the diffusion of information, the fundamental issue is really how information can be turned into a person's knowledge and hence find practical application. The usual method of "writing up" experiments is modelled on scientific reports. The traditional scientific ideal of precision, even at the writing-up stage, has become something of a straitjacket, in that it excludes forms of presentation suited to the reader wanting to be able to apply the "model" to his own situation. The main job of the report should not be to provide a basis for repeating the experiment in order to test the results; it should facilitate a decision on whether the model is applicable to the reader's own situation. What problems gave rise to the experiment? What difficulties have been encountered in the course of the work? What resources are required? And so on. The experiment and the report should provide not so much a set of procedures as reference points for assessing one's own situation and hence arriving at a basis for selecting a course of action.

Have the centres spurred on development work? Naturally there is evidence of their having done so at both the individual and the collective/local authority level. A great many teachers have taken part in experiments (and some given up for various reasons!). In many quarters - in schools and on local councils - educational debate has been sparked off. And other examples of the centres' stimulating effect could be mentioned.

On the other hand there are cases where development work existed in municipalities before centres were set up there, and there the centres have been less important. In certain cases they may even have been detrimental to local development work by taking over the spontaneous work already being carried out. A centre entails an LEA receiving some state finance over a five-year period, provided a corresponding amount is put up locally. The result has been an institutionalization of development work and a division between those schools and teachers involved in experiments and those not. The table on p.12 shows how recruitment has tended to take place. Fees have often been paid for participation. Experimentation and development work have become something out of the ordinary. The two have become synonymous. This may well have had an inhibitory effect on teachers and others wanting to engage in down-to-earth local development work. They have ended up, in a sense, outside the established model.

Thus there are two reasons for the negative effects of the centres: institutionalization, and the experimental character of development work. As a result of the latter, the approach has become to select a problem and seek a solution to it in the work carried out. This is of course rewarding and laudable from many points of view. It must be possible - and indeed desirable - to find solutions to school problems and answers to questions about how the curriculum can be implemented. However, the stress on experiments has, despite the common themes uniting the centres' work, detracted from the feeling of an integral whole. Experiments have become scattered efforts, islands isolated from other school activities. Quite apart from it being rather doubtful whether this type of activity can bring about change or facilitate a critical examination of current curricula, it is pointless - indeed impossible - to try to discover its effects on pupils. The most carefully planned and executed experiment cannot produce any significant effects if the remainder of the school's activities continue much as before.

These remarks should not be taken as a condemnation of the educational development centres, and most decidedly not of those participating in their work. They primarily reflect a desire to define local development

work and to avoid simply equating it with the work of development centres. It should also be pointed out that recently these centres have undergone certain changes. It is rather doubtful whether these changes are consistent with the centres' original objectives. Nevertheless, the work of some of the more recently established centres concerned with adult education, for example, appears to be focused on local rather than general problems.

The adult education development centres encompass a more variegated range of projects than those concerned with primary and secondary school education. The experiments run by the latter are predominantly of a more strictly pedagogical nature. The adult education centres, which are a recent development, have been less constricted by traditional models, with greater variation as a result. Probably one of the main causes of this wider variety, however, is that adult education as such more explicitly states the promotion of social equality as one of its aims than children and young people's education does. Thus experiments have been carried out, for example, to find different methods of seeking out adults with incomplete schooling, to encourage immigrants to attend courses intended for them, and so on.

Whereas the work on primary and secondary education has been focused on a relatively uniform object, the adult education centres were, right from the planning stage, intended by the NBE to promote cooperation among the wide range of educational sponsors in the municipality or county concerned: local council adult education units, "folk high schools" (if any), educational associations, vocational training schemes for the unemployed, and so on. All these factors combined have placed the work of these centres more firmly in a local setting. This is the case with what are known as "collaboration projects", for example, designed to solve problems arising at any particular time. It is also true of a number of projects run by a centre operating at the county level, described in a report which points out the opportunities the centre gives small local councils for tackling their own problems. The centre thus assumes the character of a network.

The development centres concerned with adult education are also interesting in that, as a result of the educational policies on which they are based, they are not subject to the same limitations as those working with the restricted school institution.

Further evidence of a changing approach was provided at a conference on the development centres arranged by the Committee on Education in January 1979, at which participants were told of experiences from a recently terminated development centre in Gothenburg. The centre had been run under the customary forms of organization and included around twenty projects/experiments. A substantial divergence from the kind of approach described above had emerged in the course of the centre's work, so much so that results had come to be seen more as "the work in hand" than as an end product, set down in writing. It was felt that an insistence on written reports could sometimes be a hindrance.

Asked what they would do if they could "start again from scratch", participants said they would like to be able to go beyond the confines of the project and make their work more a part of normal school activities. The often static project organizers ought, it was felt, to see their task as being mainly to participate in discussion and support the work in progress, forming a support structure in statu nascendi.

In other words, an increasing concentration on day-to-day school activities can be discerned. The purpose of development work is changing. General aspects of such work are having to take second place to truly local issues. What we are seeing today is a move towards decentralization, and also evidence of a revised view of how change takes place, i.e. by participants' self-development and development of their conception of schools and teaching.

4.2 The SSK Experiment in Uppsala

Between the autumn of 1974 and the spring of 1978, experimental work was carried out on the initiative of the SSK Commission (concerned with schools and their relationship to central and local government) at a number of schools in Uppsala, designed to give teachers, parents and pupils a greater say and more responsibility. The task involved was that of "evolving and testing practical models for giving various groups a say in and responsibility for their activities, both in the municipality as a whole and at individual schools". Compared with other experimental work, this project was unique: the content and form of development work were left entirely up to the staff, pupils and parents at each school. They were to base their efforts on problems they wished to solve or goals they wished to achieve in their own daily work. In no case did regional or central authorities or any other bodies intervene to suggest what specific problems should be tackled or how they should be solved. This was made possible by the generous guidelines laid down for this development project by the SSK Commission and by various exemptions granted by the Government.

One aim of the experiment was to see whether greater freedom and a say in the running of the school would result in changes of the kind usually envisaged in local development work. The goals of the SSK Experiment were very broadly defined: it was hoped that it would not only demonstrate the effects of greater staff influence, but also the consequences of attempting to change schools in their entirety. The SSK Experiment being presented and launched as it was, a careful discussion of what people wanted to do with their greater freedom was necessary. It was not a question of isolated experiments, but rather a matter of developing each individual school as a whole.

Thus schools alone bore the responsibility for deciding what they wanted to do during the experiment - the responsibility for <u>whether</u> they wanted to make changes, and if so <u>what</u> changes they wanted to try out, or whether they wanted to <u>dispense with</u> changes altogether. This must be borne in mind when we assess the results of and experiences from the experiment. We can ask two questions in this regard:

1) Did the experiment result in changes in school activities?

2) What can it teach us about schools' potential for self-assessment and self-renewal - regardless of whether more sweeping, only minor, or no changes at all occurred?

In the report on the SSK Experiment (Fahlgren et al.1978) it is noted that changes in school activities did take place, but at the same time it is claimed that they were no greater than those occurring over the same period at schools not included in the experiment. The changes participating schools underwent were not generally such as to single them out as "different" or "renewed" at the end of the experimental period - if it would be reasonable to expect such a thing, that is. In the final report a number of conclusions are suggested which are believed to be justified by the observations made.

Local school development must be planned in stages over a comparatively long period. It is important that individual schools and groups within them can, in the first instance, tackle what they themselves regard as the most pressing problems. At the same time, the approach must not be a narrowly "practical" one. In the longer term view, it is important for schools and groups within them to be able to assess and analyse their own problems to a greater extent in terms of the general goals of education. Local school development on the initiative of schools and LEAs themselves thus appears to call for more discussion on the general orientation of education than there has been up to now. One means of setting such a discussion going is in-service training. At the same time, though, it is possible that schools first need to work at and try out solutions to concrete practical problems in their everyday work before they are ready to engage in an in-depth debate on the general orientation of education. This illustrates once again how important it is to be able to work in a long-term perspective. Another essential condition for schools to be able to evolve local solutions is that staff, pupils and parents be given the chance to broaden their knowledge of the basic factors schools have to take into account.

During the experiment, schools primarily focused their efforts on practical issues (changes in everyday school activities, changes in forms of joint decision making and school democracy). Only to a limited extent were they able to devote themselves to analysing what factors checked or impeded the process of development. Such factors tended rather to change as a result of the experiment. However, one exception was in the case of the work on forms of joint decision making and school democracy.

For local school development to be possible in the long term, it is necessary for individual schools to tackle not only the practical issues (problem solving, changes in everyday activities, the working environment, etc.), but also all the factors combining to determine their capacity for self-assessment and self-development. The headteacher in particular, in his supervisory role, has a vital function to perform as far as the latter task is concerned. His function here is to aid, indirectly, the development of his school.

In the report it is stressed that the support, stimulus and suggestions received by schools from outside bodies during the experiment were all limited. There were some contacts with such bodies as the County Education Board in the initial stages of the experiment. The in-service training section of what was then the Uppsala College of Education offered some financial support for local in-service training. The project organizers confined themselves to taking part in discussion, rather than assuming an advisory role. On two occasions meetings were arranged for an exchange of experiences between the schools. During the experimental period, schools in fact expressed a desire for more contact with outside bodies and authorities.

Experiences from the SSK Experiment suggest that outside support and stimulation to schools is necessary as local responsibility for school development increases - at least over quite a long period of transition. Local responsibility alone is not enough to ensure that intended changes are brought about, any more than purely centralized responsibility is. All the same, any external support must be designed in such a way as to take into account the fact that planning, assessing and developing activities truly is a local responsibility.

The SSK Experiment as a form of local development work continued in its own way the trend of recent years towards an emphasis on changing local activities without expecting to be able to generalize the results. The development that takes place is principally a matter concerning the people directly effected by the development work in their daily work. While the impetus for the SSK Experiment originally came from a Government Commission, the aim of it was to hand over responsibility to schools themselves, to their headteachers, teachers, pupils and others directly effected. It is interesting to note, therefore, that the final report on the experiment draws the conclusion that outside support is necessary.

Before we exemplify and discuss the implications of this conclusion, we shall quote certain findings of a research project sponsored by the NBE - "Models of Local Development Planning" - which included the assessment of the SSK Experiment.

4.3 Models of Local Development Planning

Society today influences what goes on in the classroom firstly by means of an extensive set of rules and secondly by stating goals and general guiding principles. On the way from central government level to the classroom, these instruments of control have to pass through a series of "filters". The teacher can be said to be the last of these filters, and his or her interpretation of society's instruments of control is what finally determines what is to happen in the teaching situation.The teacher's interpretation is based on such factors as his or her personal frame of reference, lesson content, social relationships, traditions, and so on. In reality only goals and guidelines are open to interpretation to any significant degree, since the precisely formulated rule system hardly leaves room for any interpretation.

If we can assume that present-day trends will continue, society's control over education will change somewhat. There is a growing emphasis on the importance of goals as vehicles of control, and a corresponding playing down of the importance of the rule system. This should mean that superiors and subordinates all the way down to the individual school level can be given greater discretion to shape school organization and teaching so as to take account of local conditions.

The purpose of the research project was to analyse what conditions are necessary to allow school staffs to make use of and extend these powers of discretion.

The initial stage of the project was devoted to studying reform work initiated outside the school and classed where the work was to take place, i.e. in cases where solutions to problems and patterns of behaviour were suggested from outside.

These and other studies showed that work of this kind did not appear to result in any far-reaching changes, not even among those most actively involved in the process of change. Nor could any marked desire for change in more general terms be observed. As a result of these and other observations, the project came to focus on programmes of change in which those most directly affected were responsible for every stage of development work, from conception to execution. This approach should be contrasted with the centralistic R & D model of change discussed earlier. The principle that the results of development work can be generalized is thus called into question. End products in the form, say, of teaching aids are not ruled out, but in general solutions originating and imposed from without run the risk of being rejected as the "foreign bodies" they are.

The observations made during visits to a large number of schools in the first phase of the project can be briefly summed up in the following preliminary conclusions:

- It seems to be very important whether what you are tackling is something you see as your problem or something others regard as a problem.
- An individual school's development depends on what kind of discussion there is on the job which that school has to carry out. ("What do we want to do at our school?") Continuous, lively discussion appears to help development and steer it towards important issues. Scanty, superficial discussion involves the risk of superficial solutions.

- At schools where the atmosphere among the staff is an open one, where they are accustomed and willing to talk over views and problems, development obviously occurs more readily than at schools where staff avoid (or are afraid of) discussing their working situation with one another.
- It seems to be important for everyone working at a school - not just the headteacher and deputy head - to grasp the factors which govern their work, i.e. what resources are available, what the financial situation looks like, what rules and instructions apply, etc.
- The type of decision structure seems to be very important. A very hierarchical structure often seems to be an obstacle to development. A high degree of joint influence and decision making appears to stimulate development.
- This means that the headteacher's and deputy head's attitudes to development and change at their school are of key importance. Very little resistance on their part seems necessary for development to stop or fail to take place. Equally it seems to mean a great deal if they make good use of and support different renewal and development initiatives.
- If teachers and pupils have confidence in one another and also feel that the headteacher, parents and others trust them to experiment, the development process seems to get off the ground more easily than if they are afraid of and feel under surveillance from one another.
- For a development process to be able to keep going over a long period of time, it seems to be important that participants are prepared from the very outset for what may happen when local changes are made to the school. They should be ready for conflict between individuals and groups coming to light, for the "new" being paid more attention by others than the "old and familiar", and for others "seeking fault" with what they are doing. It also appears to be important that they are well prepared for trying to solve any conflicts which may arise.

- A factor of crucial importance appears to be the time dimension: development planned in the short term (a term or a year ahead) at a school is clearly far less resilient than development planned for several years ahead.

A number of other factors could be added to those listed above, e.g. views on and the use made of in-service training, and whether schools are given a truly free hand to change their organization and use of resources.

It should be noted that "seems" is the key word in the above list of factors, reflecting as it does the caution necessitated by the nature of the project's work. However, the conclusions reached have been confirmed in such differing contexts that they can be regarded as fairly dependable. They can also be regarded to a large extent as experience from and an evaluation of local development work.

As the project continued, however, attempts were made to clarify the effects and prerequisites of a more active involvement in local development work on the part of the project team. Two principal roles were assumed in this work.

First, that of a "partner for discussion" at the express wish of school staff. Metaphorically speaking, the project team were to be the mirror in which teachers and school heads could see their own reflection. They were to come in as outsiders and, to be sure, suggest solutions if asked, but not to take any initiatives. And secondly, they were to act as a more active"catalyst". This meant that, over and above the role of participating in discussion, the project team were to play a more active part in development work. This could entail, for example, undertaking a description of the psychological and social reality of a school, so as to enable staff to seek their own solutions. But it could also mean using a "diagnosis" of this kind as a basis for suggesting and elaborating programmes of action and solutions to problems in conjunction with teachers and other school staff. Both these roles answered to the need for support underlined in the conclusions from the SSK Experiment.

As a basis for the more theoretical work of the project, the perspective of the school as an organization was chosen. A study of general organization theory and its development showed it to be chiefly designed to deal with organizations of the profit-making variety (Berg 1981a,b). The characteristic phenomena of such organizations are, Berg believes, essentially different in nature from those of the school organization. The following table shows some of the differences the project drew attention to:

Business firms	Schools
Production of goods and/or services	Socialization of human beings
Economic criteria of efficiency	Less distinct criteria of efficiency
Survival dependent on continuous interaction with the market	Survival more dependent on supply of pupils

(See further Berg 1981b and Berg & Wallin 1981.)

An organization theory of the school must in other words take into account and be founded on the school's own characteristics. The latter derive from its position as an institution within society and from the implications this has for its activities. For the purposes of the project this meant, among other things, that an organization theory of the school could not be founded on a postulate of basic consensus, since the school incorporates conflict at every level:

- The history of the school is characterized by conflict between different educational ideals.
- Its tasks involve conflict:
  - official goals: democratic education
  - unofficial goals: selection.
- Conflict between the goal system (as expressed in the "Goals and Guiding Principles" section of the national curriculum) and the rule system (as expressed in educational legislation, for example): the goals represent an holistic view, the rules a fragmentary view.

- Conflict stemming from individually differing interpretations of the (conflicting) tasks of education.

The project thus applied the frame of reference of organization theory in an attempt to understand and explain the development work studied. This does seem to be a feasible approach (cf. Fahlgren et al 1978, Berg 1981b). Those who were involved in the project have claimed in a number of contexts that a model of change must also be based on a conflict approach. Following Berg (op.cit.) and Berg & Wallin (1981), such a model can be outlined as follows:

The national curricula and other official educational documents give numerous directives designed to steer school activities along lines desirable to society. Combined together, these directives mark the externally defined limits of school activities. There are also certain mechanisms which determine internally defined limits. These stem from the "culture" (cf.Berg 1981b) of the local school unit, that is, the collectivity of views, resulting from tradition and custom or personal conviction, on what schools and teaching should be like - in other words, norms. The work actually done at a school forms a greater or lesser part of the total possible range of activities. The unutilized freedom of action can be defined, in the terms of our discussion, as the difference between externally and internally defined limits.

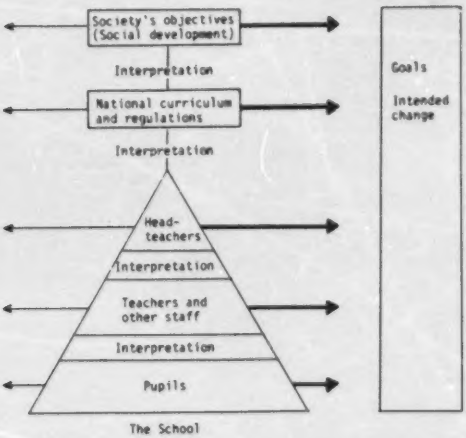
A conflict-oriented model of change must aim to provide the "actors" within education with knowledge of

- the school's goal and rule systems, as indications of the externally defined limits,
- the "culture" of the individual school, as a marker of the internally defined limits,
- the unutilized freedom af action.

Additionally, a model of change must aim to encourage school staff and pupils to try out the freedom of action available to them by engaging in "new" forms of educational activity, i.e. forms which go beyond internally defined limits.

Another way of expressing this the basic approach of the project is in terms of the concept of "shared control" discussed by Svingby (1977). From Berg & Wallin we cite:

"This involves superiors and subordinates at different levels of the school system being given greater scope for interpreting the goals and guidelines laid down by society. It refers in other words primarily to the goal system or educational system. In her doctoral thesis (1978), Svingby illustrates this interpretive process by what she calls a 'conflict model':



(Our translation)

Shared control means that superiors and subordinates at different levels of the school system themselves interpret the goals and guidelines given by society and act accordingly. This interpretive process can be regarded as a form of negotiation. Negotiation presupposes that there are negotiating parties, and for actors at different levels to be able to participate in the interpretive process they must organize themselves into interest groups of one kind or another. To ensure meaningful and constructive negotiations, those taking part must have a basic knowledge of the school as an organization. Such knowledge can be described at two levels:

1. Knowledge of the school as a rational organization. This means insight into the relationship between 'principal', executive, employees and pupils, which in turn implies insight into what forces ultimately restrict the available freedom of action.

2. Knowledge of the phenomena constituting the organization of the local school unit. We have attempted to describe some of these phenomena in terms of the coercive recruitment of pupils, professionalism, and bureaucracy.

Via a sound knowledge of the school as an organization the conditions can be created for implementing shared control."

The picture Berg and Wallin adopt from Svingby can also be put in terms of an obligation to be aware of, and be able to experiment with, the available freedom of action.

Freedom of action, a concept central to the project, is not, however, just a matter concerning teachers and other staff operating within the school; it also concerns anyone assuming a supportive function towards the school. This brings us to a number of other projects.

4.4 Development work on a regional basis

In 1970, on the initiative of the NBE, "regional panels" were set up as a basis for cooperation between County Education Boards, teacher training establishments and research institutes.

The panels' task was to further research and development. Within these terms of reference, steps were taken by a group of counties in the school year 1975-76 to set up what we might call a regional development centre. A working party set up by the panel proposed a regional development project on the theme of need-oriented teaching, with the LTG reading instruction method (cf. p.5, note 2) as a specific example. In each county a "back-up team" was formed, consisting of lecturers in education and teaching methods, if available locally, advisory officers for the junior and middle levels of the basic comprehensive school working for the County Education Board, and county educational psychologists. They in turn invited junior level teachers to take part in the project, the condition being that they

had serious plans to try LTG in their teaching. In return for their participation they were promised whatever support and assistance the back-up team could provide.

Besides the back-up teams there was a supervisory team which included, among others, representatives of the Department of Education of Uppsala University. The organization thus created was not so much to have administrative functions as to form part of the project work itself. However, here, too, administrative duties came to play a bigger part than had been intended. The Department of Education was mainly expected to keep in regular contact with the back-up personnel and spur on their work, but also to give them opportunity to discuss their experiences.

At the start of the project in the autumn of 1976 around forty remedial and junior level teachers at ten schools took part. The specific theme was LTG, but within the wider framework of need-oriented teaching. This was to emphasize that the aim was not just to introduce LTG, but also to bring about changes in working methods in other subjects and even in other years and at other school levels. It was hoped that eventually entire schools could be involved.

The financial resources available - 20 000 Swedish kronor annually - went primarily towards arranging regional conferences for participating teachers and back-up personnel. No special fees were paid for participation in the project.

One aim of this regional development project was to make use of active teachers' existing interest in changing their own school activities. Another was to test the system of having back-up teams.

The schools' experiences with LTG as a method and an approach will only be touched on briefly here. We can note that the project continued for the intended period and teachers and pupils were soon fully in the swing of it. The changes that took place can be summed up by saying that teaching was freed from its dependence on textbooks - but also from a slavish adherence to the LTG method - and came to be guided to a greater extent by what people saw as the aims of teaching. There is

also evidence to suggest that the desire to involve entire schools met with some response. Once again caution is called for, as change and development take time and the project had only been running for two or three years when reports on it were written.

To answer the question how the system of back-up teams worked, we must ask what these teams actually did. We shall let Jonsson (1[illegible], p. 28, our translation) provide the answer:

"What, then, have the back-up staff done, in concrete terms? Their work has varied slightly from one place to another, but generally speaking they have arranged and participated in courses, visited classrooms, convened and taken part in discussions with the teachers directly involved, and tried to organize cooperation between school levels; in addition they have provided teachers with various written material and practical advice. The teachers involved have widely differing opinions of the value of all this.Some are still not sure what the idea of the whole thing was, and feel they have been doing all the giving in relation to the back-up staff, who have been too concerned about gathering data for analysis. Other teachers believe - and this is the commonest view - that it would have been difficult to set a similar project going and keep the interest in it alive without outside impetus. They value 'having had someone to talk to,' 'someone interested in what we're doing and how we get on,' because this, they feel, is something out of the ordinary. Some teachers would like to have seen back-up staff in the classroom more often, as this would have provided a better basis for discussion. And of course you can never have too much advice or too many practical hints! The two regional conferences are given a high mark by the teachers generally. Coordinating experimental work has thus proved of great value,since teachers have been able to learn a lot from one another when meeting in an organized way; opportunities to do this are too few and far between, not least within individual schools. Teachers want more in-service training, more fieldwork, more meetings and more money to pay for it all! But the insistence on assessment must not be allowed to predominate!"

Opinions appear to have varied, but the overall attitude was positive. The project confirmed the obvious fact that personal characteristics of members of back-up teams are crucial to their contact with others, but also demonstrated the need for continuity, in the sense of teachers meeting the same people from one occasion to the next.

Jonsson (op.cit. p.29, our translation) also goes into what the back-up staff themselves thought about the project:

"(They all feel)... that the work has been rewarding, that the duties involved are the kind they themselves like to carry out and suit both the way their posts are structured and the goals of their work as they see them. But the LTG assignment has had to compete with other more pressing duties, and in one case it even went beyond the normal range of duties, which became too great a burden. It is generally admitted that the actual work load is not very heavy-one of the psychologists estimates that he has to devote half a day every fortnight to the assignment - but the responsibility makes itself felt, as do teachers' expectations and one's own ambition to do far more than one's time and energy permit. One person says that the work has not been, or felt, at all demanding, because his team deliberately approached a small school, which made it possible to try and involve every teacher. This avoided the staff-room polarization which can otherwise easily arise. The discussions necessary for a school's vitality and spirit of unity either do not take place without outside stimulus, or else soon degenerate into mere social get-togethers. - One of the advisory officers feels that this kind of assignment would be more satisfying if it could be concentrated into, say, one term and given top priority for that term."

It is interesting to examine the part played by the Uppsala Department of Education in the project. Above all the department acted as a point of contact for the back-up personnel, and in particular for the county educational psychologists. The latter found their contact with the department a useful source of support because of the discussions which could be carried on there with departmental staff and other back-up personnel. Members of the department felt (see Jonsson, op.cit. p.30f.) that more could have been done by way of arranging seminars, providing material for discussion, and so on. They pointed out, however, that various circumstances had made this difficult. Research institutes are not designed for taking on tasks like these which form part of practical development work.

To complete our account of this regional experiment, we quote a further passage from Jonsson's report (op.cit. p.37, our translation) which contains some important conclusions:

"Not every teacher at a school can be involved in the same development project, but the way teaching is carried out in different subjects and at different levels should, all the same, be a matter of common concern. After all, pupils' school careers should be characterized by consistency and continuity. The headteacher and deputy head/director of studies are key figures as far as bringing together the entire teaching staff of a school is concerned. Consequently, it is very doubtful whether this kind of project can or should be initiated at schools whose heads are sceptical or indifferent. Fairly soon the

development project has to be incorporated in ordinary school activities; back-up staff are only temporary guests. Hopefully, as time goes by, they will make observations which will make it easier for them to move on to new schools needing help with transforming their working methods. Once again we see how important it is for the back-up teams to have a research institute to fall back on."

4.5 Cooperation between research and in-service teacher training

The in-service training sections of the Colleges of Education at Malmö, Mölndal (Gothenburg), Umeå and Uppsala were each allocated 80 000 Swedish kronor for the budget year 1978-79, to spend on experimental work involving greater cooperation between R & D work and in-service teacher training. This work is still in progress and is being carried out in conjunction with the University Departments of Education in the cities concerned. In Malmö, Umeå and Uppsala, work started towards the end of the budget year 1977-78.

What the four regional projects have in common is that they are investigating how research and in-service training can better cooperate to support schools' local development work. Within this common framework, however, working methods vary.

In Malmö a project team consisting of representatives of the College of Education's in-service training section, the University's Department of Education and the regional panel (cf. p.28) is primarily responsible for the scheme.

One of the main tasks has been to investigate in what way research can be an asset to local development work and what kind of information there is a demand for. As a first step towards compiling an inventory of requirements of this kind, the in-service training supervisors of all six County Education Boards in the Southern Region were contacted. The need for project work was discussed with these boards on the basis of each county's particular circumstances.

Subsequently the project team decided in favour of a working model which entailed giving priority to measures which would ease channels of communication between the three interested parties: research workers (the University), teacher training staff (County Education Boards) and school staff (Local Education Authorities). Three types

of measures proved appropriate, and it has already been possible to try them out to a certain extent:

- Contact with "link" personnel, i.e. in-service training advisers, headteachers, decision makers, and those responsible for "staff team training" and headteacher training. Exchanges of information with these groups mainly take the form of group discussion.

- Direct contact with individual schools, teachers, headteachers and in-service training advisers. Such contact often has a consultancy character. Individuals have turned to project workers with requests for help, for example, in compiling information on a particular set of problems to be discussed at a teachers' day seminar. Others have requested direct involvement in development work, planned or in progress, e.g. help with assessing results. Direct consultancy help of this kind has proved popular, but has had to be restricted because of limited resources.

- The third type of help is the provision of documentation services of various kinds. This work has often been carried out in conjunction with the preceding type of involvement, e.g. help with documentary retrieval in connection with consultancy work, or compiling suitable documentation for meetings or in-service training courses. It could, however, also involve helping with the diffusion of information and experiences among schools actively involved in similar development projects.

In Mölndal (Gothenburg) the project team consists of a project manager and representatives of in-service training and educational research. Linked to it is an advisory panel on which the University, County Education Boards and Local Education Authorities are represented.

The project team initially selected four principal areas of activity:

- Providing more support and encouragement for "link" personnel, such as headteachers, in-service training advisers, school heads of department, union representatives and training college lecturers.

- Developing contact between research workers and school staff, at day seminars, for example, and improving documentation so that it better corresponds to the needs and capabilities of its readers.

- Developing a service function to channel personal contacts and assist with documentary retrieval ("switchboard operator functions").

- Supporting and encouraging in various ways groups already engaging in experimental work.

The aim was and is that this should be carried out at different levels of both the school and research. The emphasis is on building up contacts in the field and with research, supporting local development work already in progress and providing training in experimental methods. In the long run, this should reinforce local development work. The problem is not primarily seen as one of evolving channels to make research results known in the field, but rather of getting development work started and, by spreading knowledge of experimental methods, increasing people's awareness of the problems - and hence the demand for R & D information. The active participation of school staff in experimental and development work creates a need for the knowledge and experience which R & D can provide. In this way, R & D may itself be supplied with suitable, central problems to investigate.

There are considerable similarities in the methods used in Gothenburg and Malmö. As to the work being done in Umeå, its aims are so specific that we must disregard it here. The Uppsala part of the project differs from the others in its design. Here too, however, the work is being led by a project team consisting of representatives of the in-service training section of the College of Education (or the Department of Teacher Training, as it was renamed after becoming part of the University) and of the University's Department of Education. In addition there is an advisory panel consisting of teachers, head-teachers, and representatives of basic teacher training, the County Education Boards and County Councils in the Region, and the NBE.

The project team and advisory panel in the Uppsala Region decided to try to develop cooperation between research and in-service training in a specific form and within a clearly defined field, namely by

actively supporting colleges of nursing and social welfare in the Region in their local development work.

This support was to take the form of, on the one hand, direct participation by research workers in the colleges' development work and, on the other, a linking of the in-service training of college staff to this work in various ways. The in-service training envisaged was primarily that organized by the relevant section of the College of Education.

When invitations went out in the spring of 1978, about ten colleges expressed an interest in collaborating with the College of Education and the University Department of Education in conjunction with their own development work during the school year 1978-79. Responsibility for continuing, direct contact with these colleges was given to a working party, which at present is composed of one representative of teaching and one of in-service teacher training within the nursing and social welfare sector, and two representatives of educational R & D work.

The development work of most of the colleges is strikingly similar in both content and form. Generally colleges are attempting to make their courses unified wholes, by integrating or combining subjects and by organizing teaching in a variety of project forms: e.g. "family nursing studies", "case studies" and "unit studies" on the preparatory nursing course, or thematic studies on the children's nursing course. In addition, attempts are being made to structure the courses so as to allow students themselves to organize their work, either individually or in groups, to search for and analyse information, and to choose different forms of writing up their findings. Methods are chosen so as to provide opportunities for team work, give students a say in planning, and hence train them to take initiatives and shoulder responsibility. Apart from laying a foundation of knowledge and skills, teaching is also intended to instil in students an awareness of the need to continue to learn and a desire to do so, and to develop in them an ability to gather information from different sources and work on and assess these sources.

The colleges' development work originates partly in teachers' assessment and interpretation of the curriculum, and partly in their desire to change, in the long run, nursing and social welfare work itself.

The working party visits the colleges regularly and plays an active part in planning and evaluation. During their visits they sometimes join in lessons and hold discussions with students. They see their job at the colleges as being:

- to offer direct support and encouragement to development work, as researchers and teacher training workers
- in conjunction with college staff, to shed light on and help find solutions to problems encountered in the course of development work
- to examine critically the progress and results of development work
- to act as a go-between when the need for in-service training or other forms of outside help arises
- to promote contacts between the colleges involved, e.g. by arranging inter-college meetings.

Our aim in describing the regional experiments in this and the previous section is to give examples of local development work where participants have received outside assistance. Despite the different methods employed, there is considerable similarity between the Gothenburg and Malmö projects on the one hand and the Uppsala project on the other. All of them exemplify means of providing outside assistance and stimulus. The consequences of this kind of cooperation between research, in-service training and other regional staff for the establishments and individuals involved are described in detail by Jonsson (op.cit.) and Berg et al.(1979). Since our main aim is to provide examples, we shall not pursue the matter any further here. However, we shall quote a passage from the latter work which sheds light on one of the fundamental problems such projects of cooperation have to tackle:

"Current R & D and in-service training have in fact evolved as an expression of a 'centralistic strategy of change' (see further Wallin 1978). Work on the R & D - in-service training project in the Uppsala Region is based on a development strategy centred instead on the initiatives and responsibility of people working at individual schools. This strategy presupposes an extension of local decision-making powers.

Our approach to the question of cooperation between R & D and in-service training will differ according to which strategy of development we take as our starting point. If we pursue the 'centralistic' strategy, we naturally see the problem as one of how information about research efforts can be passed on to in-service training in a more efficient and comprehensive mannner, and vice versa. This calls for various technical solutions, such as a reinforcement or re-allocation of resources, but no really major structural changes to either research or in-service training are necessitated.

If we pursue the development strategy based on increased local decision making and responsibility, the question of cooperation between R & D and in-service training can be approached with two different levels of aspiration:

(a) we can attempt to develop cooperation without presupposing that either research or in-service training will need to undergo structural changes;

(b) we can attempt to develop cooperation and investigate at the same time what structural changes such cooperation imposes on research and training.

The project team's view is that the second level of aspiration should be chosen. The former can in fact be said to imply that, on the basis of <u>one</u> strategy for the development of the school, we are trying out cooperation between research and in-service training while applying structural conditions defined by <u>another</u> strategy." (Our translation)

5 WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT? - THE ISSUES AT STAKE

5.1 To change what?

As a survey of current local development work in Sweden, the above account is fairly scanty. It paints a very concentrated picture, typified more by abstractions than by concrete examples. It would, however, be an impossible task to try to do justice to all the work being carried out in this field. Our aim, rather, is to illustrate with the help of the chosen examples current trends in the content and form of development work, and thus to arrive at a basis for defining the position at present. As we pointed out in the introduction, one of our reasons for undertaking this venture was the considerable interest shown in local development work today, along with the high expectations that it will be able to help give us better schools and better functioning education.

The educational development centres have, partly as a result of the way they have been financed and their importance to the central educational authorities, come to play a key role in work and discussions on educational development. Compared with the original goals of these centres - to give scope for solving school problems by means of local, school-based experiments, the solutions then being passed on to other schools and teachers - there has since been a tendency to place a greater emphasis on the experimental work itself and participation in it. The importance of experiments lies more in the benefits they bring participants and the part the latter play in school activities, than in what they give the outsiders who register their results.

This development is not peculiar to the educational development centres, but reflects a general trend leading in the longer term to an emphasis on everyday school activities; that is, development work is changing from being experiments and isolated projects and is instead becoming a stage in the planning and carrying out of normal school activities. Of the development centres, this applies in particular to those concerned with primary and secondary school education. Those focused on adult education have, as a result of somewhat different goal descriptions, employed different methods. As was mentioned earlier,

their principal aim has been to work locally to create a better basis for adult education, e.g. by creating opportunities for joint efforts by different course organizers. The aims of the various other types of development work exemplified above also involve a departure from the view of such activities as isolated experiments. If we look more closely at the different projects and ask who has been involved in them and what kind of work has been done, we find some cases where the impetus to change the form and content of teaching has come from groups of teachers, others where the aim has been to bring about change across the whole three-year school level, and yet others where development work has been carried on throughout the school or the headteacher's "district". The examples examined illustrate a desire to carry on development work as part of day-to-day activities, using work units of varying size and embracing aims going beyond the original terms of reference of the experiment. In the light of what we said earlier about the predominant view of school change at the time when development work in the education system was taking on more definite shape, the current trend is more than just a departure from the idea that experiments are the answer to every problem. It also implies a revised view of how change takes place, as we discussed earlier.

The changing view of schools and education is of course not just a reflection of vague, more or less well-founded discontent. The criticism of the centralistic R & D model which really gathered momentum in Sweden (and elsewhere) in the late 1960s, also reflected an acceptance of philosophies and theories of science quite unlike those from which the scientifically inspired R & D model had emerged. Even if Sweden did not have the fierce debate which took place on the continent of Europe, as well as in Norway and Denmark, for example, there were undercurrents of critical and Marxist theory which brought new dimensions to educational discussion.

At a theoretical level we can trace a development in Sweden which not only corroborates the questioning of the R & D model of change, but even more so confirms the trend we see at present. This development in the theoretical field can be seen as originating in the

studies of individualization carried out by Dahllöf in the mid-1960s. He explained the teaching process in terms of the framework factors governing the teacher's actions. One of these was the availability of time. The timetable only allowed limited time for any particular subject. There was not enough time for every pupil to learn everything. The idea of framework factors is interesting for a number of reasons. First, the time factor (i.e. the timetable), for example, is dependent on political decisions. Naturally this applies to every limiting factor of a similar kind: rules governing class-size, availability of classrooms, rules concerning grading, etc. This makes it easier to see the school in the social context in which it belongs. Secondly, these rules do not function independently, but via the teacher (or headteacher) who interprets them as possibilities and constraints. This interpretation is in turn dependent on the teacher's basic views about the school and its position in society, about the pupil and his potential, etc., as defined by what could be called the teacher's fundamental conception of education. A conception of this kind also has political undertones and arises out of the same social reality in which educational decisions are arrived at.

Thirdly, this interpretation of rules and instructions, goals and recommendations, on the basis of a fundamental conception of education, and their conversion into actual teaching, also lay the foundations of a tradition which is sometimes referred to as the "hidden curriculum" of the school. These ideas have been further pursued by Lundgren in a number of works (1972, 1977 and 1979) based on his studies on the teaching process and curriculum theory. They also form one of the points of departure of an investigation Svingby (1977) carried out for the 1974 Commission on Teacher Education, into the goals of teacher training, in which she discusses the implications of a basic conception of education. She pursues this discussion further in her doctoral dissertation of 1978. Referred to in terms of a "code", but with similar implications, the question of the teacher's fundamental conception of education and what this implies is examined in Arfwedson (1979) and Arfwedson et al. (1979).

More examples could be cited and our discussion extended considerably, but this is not the place. The aim of this brief digression is to indicate how trends in practical educational development work run parallel to currents in the theoretically oriented areas of educational research.

To conclude, we would reiterate that a model of change based on a view of teaching as an interaction of framework factors and the teacher's interpretation of these factors, has two fundamental components. First, frameworks change as a result of political decisions. Secondly, within these frameworks change is brought about more by a change in the fundamental conception of education by which teaching is shaped than by methods and techniques imposed from without.

5.2 Excursus

The references above to Dahllöf, Lundgren, Svingby and others provide a framework for discussing change and development in terms related to general educational theory. This is important, since change and development cannot of course be understood or explained in isolation, but only when seen in the context of the school as an institution set up by society. In this section we shall digress briefly to mention two instances of research which focus on the concrete issue of school change and development and which shed light on the problems surrounding this issue, but which also aim to use change and development as a stepping stone towards furthering general educational theory.

One of these is the work of Lindblad (1980), who, in a paper entitled "School and change", discusses the potential for change in schools in connection with the assessment of the educational development centres mentioned earlier. His view of the school is a social one and his theoretical approach that of educational and social science. He distinguishes between "dynamically conservative" and "reformist" change. By the former he means change which is only intended to correct minor problems within an education system, whereas reform has the ultimate goal of changing the underlying power structure of society.

On the subject of educational development work, Lindblad considers that innovatory activity which only involves technical changes and which has purely technical implications results in dynamically conservative change, even if what is intended is an educational reform based on political decisions. Such reforms are neutralized.

Lindblad also believes that to be able to carry out "reformist" changes (the Swedish educational reforms of the 1960s can serve as examples), political power on its own is not enough. Greater political awareness, i.e. a greater political involvement of broader sections of the population, is necessary as a counterbalance to the tendency of the relatively independent education system to neutralize reforms.

The politicization Lindblad talks of must also, he believes, be reflected in educational development work. For the purposes of this survey, this is one of the key points in Lindblad's work. He puts education in its social context and shows how the work of educational development (change), too, has political implications.

Lindblad's paper also underlines the importance of distinguishing between different kinds of change when discussing change and development work in schools. The decisive divide goes between, on the one hand, changes within the existing framework of curricula, regulations and legislation, whose main concern is to increase the effectiveness of school activities, and, on the other, change constituting reform, that is to say, casting aside earlier frameworks as new values and changing conditions enter the school.

Following on from Lindblad's work, it can furthermore be argued that the major problems do not arise over change within existing frameworks, i.e. "dynamically conservative" change. The crucial problems arise when "reforms" are to be implemented. As the latter entail a change in the goals of and basic values underlying school activities, any strategy of change which does not take these goals and values into account has a fundamentally wrong approach.

If the impetus for more far-reaching changes in schools and their

work comes from outside the school itself, this must affect how we look at and attempt to understand and explain change and development. A political perspective in one sense or another is necessary. For those with the job of teaching in schools, however, the political point of view does not come first. Their principal aim is to provide high-quality teaching. Hence their understanding of the school and their explanatory models are limited to teaching and its underlying factors. In other words, they cannot easily formulate the principles and objective factors on which they base their teaching and other school work. The rules and principles governing their actions in the teaching situation are mostly latent. It might also be said that these rules and principles constitute the fundamental conception or code discussed above.

The nature of this fundamental conception of education, or, to put it differently, teachers' educational thinking, is such that it does not easily lend itself to investigation. It is not possible to question teachers outright about how they see the circumstances and principles determining their actions in the teaching situation. Such underlying factors can only be brought to light indirectly by observing teachers' actions and interpreting them from a theoretical point of view.

These are the ideas behind a project to study experimental work led and/or initiated by teachers (Hasselgren & Lindblad 1980). We can take this project as an example of research which may shed light on the factors fundamental to change and development discussed in this survey.

5.3 Local development work

Defined as a component part of day-to-day school activities, local development work is given a clear meaning. It is local in the sense that, quite simply, it forms part of the planning of work which takes place in one form or another at every school in every headteacher's "district", within every sector of education, children's, young people's or adult education. As far as the nine-year comprehensive school is concerned, the ground has been cleared for this by the provision that, in future, every school will have to draw up a plan of its activities for the year ahead. This means that development work

will not be a special task, not the preserve of a chosen few. It will concern the school as a whole. However, even if this is indicative of a trend and can be considered a move in the right direction, there will still be occasions when experiments in a restricted sense may be justified. Thus, for example, as part of a school's planning and current activities, one person or a group of people may be entrusted with the job of pioneering new methods and solutions. This special assignment originates, however, in common planning, i.e. it is something in which everyone shares in some sense, and this is an important condition.

Furthermore, outside bodies will still need to have development work rooted in practical school activities carried out. This should be self-evident. The NBE, as the central authority responsible for the state and development of schools and education, will need to be able to test ideas and solutions, to entrust, say, a Local Education Authority with the task of solving specific problems. It will continue to be able to set aside funds for such work for specified periods, on condition that the LEA in question supplies an equivalent amount. Whether we see this as tantamount to a survival of the educational development centres is unimportant. The key issue is the need for this kind of work. Equally vital is that it should not become set in certain forms or limited to periods when special grants are available, but be carried out when the need arises, and also - that it is not confused with local development work - local in the sense that it is undertaken by those affected by it at a school - or with work whose aim is to implement current curricula at particular schools. If we accept this distinction, we would do better to call the latter two types of project local curriculum work than local development work. In this way we would come closer to one of the original aims of the educational development centres, the provision in the longer term of a basis for continued educational reform.

It is worth touching briefly on the effects of local development work at this point. As we have said before, development work is at present arousing considerable interest and high expectations. It should be beyond doubt that these expectations do have a basis in reality, but we are on more precarious ground when talking about

the actual nature and extent of possible beneficial effects. We have to assume, among other things, that change itself is not sufficient. It must be defined in relation to specific criteria if we are to talk about development. The criteria to apply are the goal descriptions set out in the curricula as codifications of educational policy aims.

Regardless of its scope, local development work has effects on the teachers, headteachers and other school staff participating in it. It can inspire workaday routine with new variety and enthusiasm - and hence make a difference to the pupils too. In certain respects it is a form of in-service training, as participants learn about the school and the educational process of which they form an integral part. Participation can be seen as part of a continuing process of personal development in relation to one's duties. All these are necessary, if not sufficient, conditions for development work to be beneficial to pupils as well as teachers. Sufficient conditions are fulfilled when participants' deepened knowledge and insight are transformed into the solutions to problems or changes in teaching patterns which the development project was designed to achieve.

Even small-scale school development projects have these effects on pupils and are clearly justified, therefore. All the same, it is probably true to say that small-scale efforts can hardly be expected to have very marked effects on pupils, for the simple reason that they are isolated attempts to solve isolated problems. An isolated experiment forms so small a part of the totality of influences and circumstances determining teaching and the pupil's school situation that far-reaching effects can hardly be expected. Basically the same thing applies when a number of small-scale experiments are strung together, in so far as they are only responses to individual, acute problems and do not have a common basis.

This common basis, in the form of a (possibly revised) conception of the goals of education and of what schools should do for society and for their pupils, is essential if such efforts are to bring about radical changes which also have a marked effect on pupils. A common basis makes it possible to coordinate various development efforts

and change overall work patterns. Extremely drastic examples to illustrate these arguments are easily found. One such example is the Steiner Waldorf method of the anthroposophists, where the central issue is not working patterns and techniques, but the philosophy of life and fundamental values on which the work of these schools is founded. (See Ahlström et al. 1977.) The experimental upper secondary school in Gothenburg is another case where sweeping changes have been implemented - so far-reaching in fact that the school no longer exists. These changes originated in a basically political form of radicalism. Both these examples illustrate the proposition that radical change presupposes an equally radical change of fundamental approach. It is neither possible nor necessary for every form of development work to have such far-flung ambitions. However, we can refer in this context to a third example of a more all-embracing experiment, one which we would not, however, discuss in the same terms as the experimental upper secondary school. This is the Öckerö Experiment, which for various reasons is receiving much attention at present. At the risk of failing to do it justice, we could describe this experiment in superficial terms by quoting an extract from one of the reports on it:

"We knew, as has already been pointed out, that at the start of the experiments pupils were generally discontented with their school situation, that to a very large extent they disliked or were indifferent to school. This was the starting point for changing the form and content of school work. We also had a rough idea of what pupils thought important, i.e. what subjects and methods they gave priority. The experiment now gave them the opportunity to find out whether they learnt anything, and whether they liked being at school, when they were in a position to influence their own work situation. The terms of the experiment also involved quite different working conditions for the teachers. The old routine of one class, one lesson at a time, with a pre-planned apportionment of work and a closed door, was turned upside down. Inter-subject and inter-year lessons, pupils seeking out and choosing teachers and projects, varying numbers of pupils, open doors, no more school bells, and no strict boundaries between teaching and other duties: this was the teacher's new routine." (Sandgren et al. 1978, p. 10-11, our translation)

If we go a stage further, however, we find a different version of the main aims of the experiment in the same report:

"1 To bring out in pupils an awareness that they share the responsibility for their own development and education.

2 To spur on pupils and teachers to an active search for knowledge.

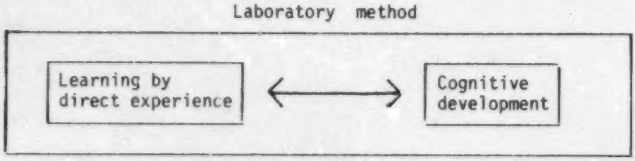
3 To create a favourable social environment for teaching and working, for teachers and pupils alike." (Op.cit. p.9, our translation)

The experiment sets out to accomplish all this. The ambition which these aims embody, however, is presented by Sandgren elsewhere (Sundström 1976) in a different way again:

"The basic assumption of the work of the project is that learning situations of a'direct experience' nature play a part in and guide the process of cognitive development. Conversely it is true that the individual's level of cognitive development determines what learning situations assume the character of a direct experience.

We can illustrate this as follows:

This interplay of learning and development arises when the individual is given the opportunity to tackle the subject matter he is aiming to master by means of investigation and active testing, that is to say, by employing a 'laboratory method'.



The laboratory method

By a laboratory method we mean that the pupil's acquisition of knowledge takes place in a constant interplay of positive action and intellectual analysis.

Positive action means that, within the limits imposed by his cognitive apparatus, the individual follows up, explores and seeks to resolve a problematical situation. The situation is problematical in the sense that it is not just a problem set and defined by others, but also a personally experienced problem calling for a solution. Positive action comes about when the individual sees the point in tackling a set of problems and wants to find solutions to specific difficulties. (...)

Intellectual analysis is intimately linked to the circumstances and possibilities of social reality. Knowledge is deepened by the interaction of social confrontation and a conceptual analysis of what it is the individual is learning and of what is right and wrong or good and bad.

The laboratory method turns outwardly declarable knowledge, i.e. the kind that results in grades and encouragement, into personal knowledge, i.e. an attitude towards people and problems."(p. 2ff., our translation)

The research team involved in the experiment thus has very clear ideas about its basis and points of departure, ideas which are clearly shared by participating teachers and headteachers.

All this is just the ideological background to the Öckerö Experiment, which entails far more than a mere superficial solution of Öckerö's educational problems. Consequently this development project is no straightforward venture. Differing views among members of school staff or between teachers and their headteacher, divergent parental opinion, all these make for confrontation and strained personal relations. Often far-reaching changes are called for, and these take time. Social tensions and the long-term nature of development work make it very demanding.

Experience suggests that local development work needs to be supported and stimulated if it is not simply to fade away after a brief upsurge of activity. The examples given earlier, along with the Öckerö Experiment, show some of the different ways such stimulus and support can be given. Without going into detail on what a support system might look like, we shall, nevertheless, suggest a few components of such a system.

Questions regarding what tasks schools are to perform and what goals headteachers' districts, upper secondary schools or local council adult education units should be working towards, cannot be left entirely up to the unit concerned. They must be issues concerning the local council, with the Local Education Authority shouldering political responsibility for school development in a more concrete fashion than is the case at present. This means that teachers, for example, need not assume the full burden of responsibility which a

local development project might entail. This can be seen as a form of internal support.

We can also talk about internal support with reference to the need for schools' organizational structures to be designed so as to promote local development work (cf. Berg 1981b and Berg & Wallin 1981). At any rate they should not be allowed to have an impeding effect. From the same point of view, current headteacher training gives cause for optimism. To a large extent the headteacher personifies an internal support function.

Local development work also appears to benefit from external support. This need involve no more than the teacher or headteacher being able to turn to an outsider who is prepared to discuss problems without actually doing more than providing the mirror in which the school and its teachers can see themselves.

It can, however, entail far more, as the examples cited above illustrate. Whatever shape a support organization assumes, however, its task will always be a delicate one. The people working in it must, for example, be constantly on their guard against any tendency for development work to regress to the centralistic R & D model of change examined earlier. The support organization must avoid the risk of taking over the responsibility from the people the development work affects, i.e. take care not to centralize what is a local concern.

Since development work in the educational field is always limited by society's expectations that schools will perform certain tasks and by legislation regulating school activities, a support organization must - despite the risk of centralism in decentralization - embrace a steering function. Steering here is not to be interpreted as laying down rules and instructions about how people are to act, but rather as being able to put a case for what count as criteria of development - as opposed to mere change. This in turn makes it necessary for a support organization (in its entirety or in its sub-parts) to have a well-considered fundamental conception of education of the kind discussed earlier (cf. Lander 1978). Since this fundamental conception ultimately derives from values which can most

naturally be described in political terms, educational development work is placed in the context in which it belongs. Development work is a matter for the school and the education system, but only within the framework of the goals set by society. The independence and autonomy of the school is only relative.

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